

DRAFT—PSSC FO 2008 OHMVR GRANTS

2008 Education Strategy Project

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office (PSSC FO) manages some 1.65 million acres of public lands extending from the Colorado River to the Pacific Ocean and south to the Mexican border. These public lands are adjacent to California's most densely populated urban areas and include lands within Riverside, San Diego, San Bernardino, and Los Angeles counties.

The BLM PSSC FO OHV Safety and/or Education Program seeks funding to design interpretive signs, retrofit existing kiosks with up-to-date information, develop brochures and purchase a UV Design Printer/Plotter and Photocopier.

How this project sustains OHV Recreation or OHV Opportunity:

For the purposes of this project, we will focus primarily within the following two planning areas. Within the equipment portion of this grant, the UV Design Printer/Plotter will be used for OHV projects throughout the entire BLM California Desert District (all 5-field offices).

1. The Northern & Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan (NECO) covers lands extending from the Coachella Valley continuing to the edge of the California Desert District near the Colorado River. Under the land use plan, approximately 1500 miles of trail systems are available for recreational use. The Meccacopia Special Recreation Area is located within this region. Its unique mixture of stunning landscapes, tectonic formations, and specialized plant and animal life draw large numbers of visitors to the area each year. The location offers ideal camping and OHV touring opportunities, receiving its heaviest use during the winter holiday seasons when OHV patrols are brought in for safety and compliance.
2. The South Coast Resource Management Plan includes lands within western Riverside County extending south through San Diego County. This plan is currently going through revision. Route designations and inventories are a primary focus

During past grant cycles, PSSC FO produced brochures introducing the public to points of interest, regulations, and habitat and species of concern. On busy holiday weekends, staff presented maps and brochures of the Meccacopia Special Recreation Management Area. For instance, last year at the popular Drop 31 area, visitors learned about the Mecca Aster, an endangered purple daisy found along many trails within in the Mecca Hills region. This small outreach effort had amazing results. The immediate response from young OHV riders to their parents and peers was "Take photos, don't pick". In 2007, Fire Crews informed visitors about fire prevention, including warning

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how RV generators and campfires can ignite desert wildfires even during winter seasons. Young and old alike learned the importance of spark arrestors in fire prevention.

The focus for the 2008 recreation season is the Chuckwalla Desert Wildlife Management Area (DWMA). The BLM established the DWMA to protect the federally listed desert tortoise and 38 special status plant and animal species. This region historically contained some of the highest known densities of desert tortoises in California. For this reason, the US Fish and Wildlife Service designated this area as Critical Habitat for the desert tortoise and the BLM designated it as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). In addition to its importance to the desert tortoise, this region contains some of the best-developed and most diversified Sonoran Desert flora in California.

In terms of OHV recreation, this scenic area provides many miles of open routes including the Bradshaw Trail (a 70-mile National Back Country Byway). The Meccacopia Special Recreation Area, which emphasizes responsible motorized recreation, borders the region to the west.

Funding from this grant will provide educational signing within the Chuckwalla DWMA and the surrounding areas. Because the purpose of this DWMA is to promote the recovery of the desert tortoise, education efforts that seek to protect the desert tortoise and its habitat are of critical importance. Threats to the desert tortoise from OHV use include off-road driving and traveling at excessive speeds; this behavior results in habitat degradation and tortoise death by crushing. Garbage left behind from some OHV users increases the population of ravens, predators of baby tortoises. Surrounding the Chuckwalla DWMA are other recreational areas, including the Meccacopia Special Recreation area and the Bradshaw Trail. To limit user conflicts between these boundaries, the NECO plan emphasizes the need for signing the periphery of the DWMA. Educational signs will enhance visitor awareness of important natural resources such as desert tortoise and promote responsible recreation.

Description of material to be developed:

Fifteen years ago, OHMVR grants supported the design and construction of 23 kiosks currently found throughout the NECO planning area. Today, many of these kiosks are vandalized or faded, and fail to do the job. Although these kiosks provide useful travel information, public information on critical issues such as desert tortoise protection is not available. Currently, the backs of these kiosks are blank and unused. Kiosks in the future will make use of this unused space and display additional information on the back, such as resource and safety information. The words "Further Information on Back" would be stenciled on the supporting arm of the kiosk.

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The following products will be produced during the 2008 grant cycle:

- 23 Kiosks Retrofitted
 - 2 Vandalized Kiosks replaced
 - Drop 31
 - Cactus City Kiosk shared message with Joshua Tree NP
- Display panels at interpretive sites would be installed
 - Entrance to DWMA
 - Red Cloud Mill Site
- 3 Resource Brochures would be developed
 - DWMA importance
 - Red Cloud/Summit Cultural Importance
 - Orocopia Sage Introduction
 - Tortoise Speed Limit Signs on the Bradshaw Back-Country Byway
- Outreach and OHV Training Posters

Equipment needed to produce outcome:

Because of the need to replace signs constantly due to fading and vandalism, and the continual need to provide up-to-date information, we are proposing purchasing a wide-format inkjet printer that uses special fade-resistant UV-protected solvent-based inks for printing directly onto vinyl or plastic sheeting. This equipment will support products throughout the California Desert District planning areas and will create desert durable, weather resistant signs at a fraction of the cost and with a quicker turn-around than outsourcing their production.

OHV information promoting safe and legal Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreational use on public lands is a crucial element of the PSSC FO OHV program. BLM OHV program information and education materials supplemental those available from OHMVR assist the communities and law enforcement agencies of Western Riverside County. Therefore, we request assistance with the purchase of a photocopier to supplement the heavy workload demands on our older office photocopier. Reproductions of brochures produced in-house are made available to our partner groups such as the City of Blythe and the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) OHV Task Force is important in the operation of the program. Materials printed in-house promote safe and legal Off-Highway Vehicle use and location of designated routes of travel. Partner agencies utilized BLM material during compliance outreach projects.